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ABSTRACT

The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) now requires teacher education programs to implement a multicultural component as part of teacher education. There is no expectation that a teacher education program would, or could, produce students with broad-based knowledge in all areas, but it is reasonable to require some depth of understanding of Third World issues generally, and perhaps one area specifically, e.g., Latin America. Students should also have expertise on United States society, a sense of the participation and contribution by minorities, and some understanding about one minority group. This paper offers a feasible design of options for implementing a multicultural education course in teacher education programs, given normal resources. An outline is presented of the goals, assumptions, historical development, teacher competencies, and a curricular process for such a course. (JD)

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MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION FOR THE CLASSROOM

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The classroom and the curriculum must now be rid of institutionalized racism. No longer is it acceptable to teach only about the white Westernized heritage. With the legitimization of American pluralism came increased pressure to educate American children in that context. The challenge was finally met with the introduction of multicultural education in the 1980's.

Resistance was strong, and it remains so. It appears that the vast majority of school districts as well as most colleges and universities have been reluctant to implement broad-based curricular changes that would integrate multicultural education into the classroom. Still, the initiative for multicultural education is gradually making progress. School districts, several with state assistance and direction, are providing workshops on multicultural education for their classroom teachers. Increased interest in the Third World stemming from the research for new markets led business to support efforts to study other cultures and the international context. Washington State University recently adopted a new general education requirement in its curriculum that dramatically increased enrollments in ethnic studies courses.

NCATE Mandate. The National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) now requires teacher education programs to implement a multicultural component as part of teacher education. This mandate requires substantial change just as the integration of multicultural education into the classroom means a significant restructuring of what is taught and how it is taught. A limited study that focused on multicultural education in Idaho suggested that colleges and universities in the Pacific Northwest demonstrate little indication that they would incorporate a multicultural context (Bermingham, 1984). Those institutions with a school of education did however move to meet the requirements of the NCATE mandate (if not the spirit of it).

Teacher education programs are left with the tremendous responsibility of educating prospective teachers to meet the challenges of the multicultural classroom. This role requires teacher education programs to overcome the majority of their students' college classroom experiences, which denies a multicultural context. Prospective teachers must gain a clear understanding of what multicultural education is during their teacher education program and apply that conceptually to redefine their learning experience.

The program's task is to provide that understanding along with strategies for applying it. Many states have redefined the concept "multicultural education" within their own context, clarified the underlying assumptions, developed goals and objectives in terms of student outcomes, and

outlined essential teacher competencies for promoting a multicultural focus in education. These guidelines should direct the revision of teacher education programs.

Multicultural Education Defined. Cultural pluralism is not a new concept in the United States, though it only recently achieved legitimacy with the civil rights demonstrations and their legislative victories of the 1960's. Increased awareness of ethnicity in the 1970's strengthened this legitimacy and pushed many states to establish educational commissions whose charge centered on an inquiry into the diversity of the cultural heritages represented among the state's population. The influx of Southeast Asian, Central American, and Caribbean immigrants and its resultant change in the texture of American society underscores the need for further inquiry by these commissions in the 1980's.

The transference of the recognition of the cultural pluralistic society into the educational system is multicultural education. The operationalizing of this concept requires inclusion of the society's racial, ethnic, and cultural groups. Consequently, multicultural education should be regarded as a philosophy, as a process which directs the total education enterprise.

Although the use of the term multicultural education varies widely, it is generally used to suggest a type of education concerned with various cultural groups within American society. Banks (1984) suggests a major goal of multicultural education is to alter the educational environment promoting respect for a wide range of cultural groups in order to achieve equal educational opportunity. Multicultural education modifies the school environment producing a reflection of the ethnic diversity within American society. This situation implies more that just the study of different cultures. It is also an institutional change within the educational setting in order to accommodate students of diverse ethnic backgrounds.

We are currently not preparing most individuals to function successfully within a world community of the future. Many students grow up in communities that are culturally homogeneous and have limited experiences with, and understanding of, people from other cultural groups. We must recognize that the white race is a world minority with five out of six persons in the world being non-white. It can also be noted that the vast majority of the world is non-Christian. Because the birthrate of non-whites greatly exceeds white, white Christians will be an even smaller minority by the year 2000. We must present students from all racial, ethnic, and social class groups with cultural and ethnic alternatives and teach them to live in a world that is ethnically and racially diverse. Multicultural

education is the structured process designed to foster the needed understanding, acceptance, and constructive relations among peoples throughout the world.

Obstacles. Teacher education programs face considerable obstacles in adapting multicultural education into curricula. Generally, three options can be considered. First, multicultural education could be completely integrated into existing programs. Secondly, teacher education could develop a course on the topic making it a program requirement. Thirdly, a course outside the school of education could be used to fulfill the same purpose. This course might be designed specifically with the goals of multicultural education in mind or it might be an existing course, i.e., cultural anthropology or the sociology of race relations. Various combinations of the three options have been tried at some institutions.

Yet, the implementation of multicultural education has been complicated at many institutions. There is an unwillingness to commit significant resources to the required program changes and the necessary expertise is lacking in existing faculties. Universities and colleges have, in some cases, simply tried to do the minimum to maintain their NCATE accreditations. More troublesome is the observation that they see this minimum as a long term answer. There are no plans for priority hirings nor for faculty retooling to fill the multicultural expertise gap.

The failure of the liberal arts programs at universities and colleges to take a leading role in the implementation of multicultural education has undermined much of the possibility for change. How can a teacher be sensitive to cultural differences in a substantive way without any real understanding of the different cultures? It is not the curricular responsibility of teacher education programs to offer courses that literature, history, anthropology, and ethnic studies should provide. Are teacher education programs able to generate basic programs in Third World studies? And if so, how do they implement the global component of multicultural education?

Clearly, there is no expectation that teacher education programs would, or could, produce students with broad-based knowledge in all these areas, and it is equally unrealistic to anticipate that most college graduates in social sciences or humanitities even would have this depth of knowledge. It is reasonable, however, to require some depth of understanding of Third World issues generally and perhaps one particular region (e.g. Latin America) specifically. Students should have expertise on United States society, a sense of the breadth of participation and contribution by minorities in the society, and some depth of understanding

about one minority group. Somehow the institution must provide and require this level of expertise.

Within the teacher education program instructors must also gain similar expertise. Sensitivity without substance cannot and will not work. Multicultural education is not a token change. It requires solid training before or during the focus on attitudes, methods, and materials.

The Idaho study, referred to above, demonstrated that both funding and personnel resources need to be joined by a state educational commitment if multicultural education is to be a successful philosophical priority during this century (Bermingham, 1984). The study indicated that higher education in Idaho had not taken multicultural education seriously and that the state office for education showed little, if any, interest in providing existing classroom teachers with workshop opportunities to acquire some training in this field. As reported in the study, Idaho teachers were particularly weak in multicultural training and experience. The state's teacher education programs sought changes, but they too had limited expertise. Only the University of Idaho's teacher education program seemed to have a clear direction, though it faced an uphill struggle with a liberal arts program whose commitment to multicultural curriculum was marginal at best.

Teacher education must take more of a lead if multicultural education is to be implemented. It must gain the support from the wider institution. Taking the lead and achieving that support will not come easy. The Idaho study indicated that most programs had little inclination to go beyond what they were forced to do to maintain accreditation. It showed that the faculty in teacher education programs were generally ill-equipped in multicultural training and had little motivation to retool leaving the believers and the coercion of the NCATE mandate to point for change.

Perhaps given normal resources and traditional resistance, there are only a few available options for teacher eduacation programs to implement multicultural education. A sound strategy for a small liberal arts college includes combining efforts with the social sciences or the humanities. Without creating an undo burden, it should be possible to work together with one or more individual faculty, in history, for example, and develop a U.S. history course using a multicultural context. Similarily, a global studies or cultural anthropology course could be used to develop essential cross-cultural understandings. With these two required courses, students would have a substantive background for both the global and domestic aspects of multicultural education.

It remains for teacher education to develop the means for transfer of the prospective teacher's knowledge base into skills for the classroom. The design for such a course would incorporate the following goals, assumptions, historical development, teacher competencies, and culminate with a proposed curricular process for students.

Goal. A basic aim of multicultural education is:

> To help students accept themselves and other persons as having dignity and worth. To achieve this aim, a multicultural program should place emphasis on similarities and differences among individuals and groups. Similarities should be viewed as those characteristics which make people human, and differences should be viewed as those characteristics which make each person or group unique and special. In this context, differences are viewed as positive. Thus, students will be helped to respect and accept a wide range of diversity, including physical differences, emotional differences, cultural differences and differences in lifestyles among individuals and groups (Washington State Handbook, 1984b, p. 1).

Developing a multicultural focus implies a mode of experience and learning to be infused and integrated throughout the curriculum and throughout the school program. An attempt should be made to design cross-cultural experiences whenever possible.

Assumptions. At this point, it would be helpful to clarify underlying assumptions upon which multicultural education is based. The pursuit of multicultural education and the charge to prepare teachers for multicultural classrooms generally are based on assumptions such as:

1. The teacher is a "mediator of culture." Teachers play the role of transmitter and interpreter of society's philosophy and values. To play this role effectively, a teacher should have the broadest concept of culture possible.
2. A complex relationship exists between teachers and students of differing backgrounds. The classroom contains a complicated network of relationships that is further compounded when the cultural backgrounds of teacher and students are different.
3. As teachers become more knowledgeable of cultural variations, their potential for altering their teaching to accommodate those variations will increase.
4. As teachers exhibit sensitivity to culturally different learning styles, the achievement of the culturally different student will increase.
5. As the classroom environment reflects cultures of students, their motivation and achievement will increase.

6. As all students learn about cultures, they will be better prepared to function in our global society.

Evolution of Multicultural Education. Analysis of the evolution of multicultural education provides insights for teachers. Society's attitudes and perceptions have directly impacted educational practices. The belief in multicultural education has evolved through the years. Some of the more dominant perceptions are:

1. Immigrant Nature of the U.S. Except for the Indian peoples, the U.S. is a reflection of immigrants from all around the world. Many have come here to flee from repressive governments. This has created a strong legacy of support for human rights and freedom. Unfortunately, however, a look at America's past shows an equal legacy of discrimination and the denial of human rights for certain groups.

2 Melting Pot Myth. This belief was introduced in a Broadway play, The Melting Pot, in 1909, describing America as a great melting pot mixing and reforming all races of Europe. This concept assumed that only the dominant white Anglo-Saxon Protestant culture was worth saving, expecting that all others must give up their own cultural heritage to be admitted. This myth excluded many ethnic groups including Blacks, Hispanics, Asians, and American Indians who were considered unmeltable.

3. Cultural Mosaic. Many immigrants, either because they were unwilling or unable to assimilate in the mainstreamed society, choose to cluster themselves together in ethnic communities and neighborhoods in the larger cities. Gradually a new concept of nationality emerged, with peoples from different cultures living together, subcultures contributing to a larger national identity. This is the basis for the idea of cultural pluralism.

4. Renewed Interests in Cultural Pluralism. The Black Power movement of the 1960's and television programs such as Haley's Roots expressed cultural pluralism as an ideal.

5. Evolution of Education for a Multicultural Society. The transfering of the recognition of cultural pluralsitic society into our educational system is multicultural education. Banks (1984) traces curricula changes beginning with the traditional Anglo-American Centric Model. This approach represents the narrow mainstreamed perspective as described by the melting pot myth. The next phase was represented by adding courses such as various ethnic history and culture classes. This might be referred to as the Ethnic Additive Model. The additive phase was generally followed by the Multi-ethnic Model. With this approach, the Anglo-American perspective is represented as only one of several perspectives on a particular historical event with no group deemed inferior or superior to another. A Multinational Model might be considered the ultimate curriculum goal. In this model,

students study events from multinational perspectives. This is the intent of global education. It is hoped that all students can study all subject areas from diverse ethnic perspectives.

Teacher Competencies Required in Multicultural Education. The gradual change in perception from the melting pot concept to cultural pluralism with its corresponding curricula changes redefines teacher competency. To achieve quality multicultural education, it is important that educators are trained to cope effectively with problems that may arise from bringing together distinct cultures with their differing values, customs, and mores. Hopefully, this training will bring about teacher competencies that will lead to success in multicultural classrooms. Some of the essential competencies designated by Washington State (1984a) include teachers' ability to:

1. Demonstrate effective techniques and methods to build and enhance student self-concept.
2. Recognize the importance of overcoming cultural and racial stereotypes and prejudices as well as planning relevant means to combat both.
3. Understand the history of minority groups in the United States, and in particular, of the civil rights movement.
4. Apply knowledge about the psychology and impact of prejudice.
5. Understand that all people are human--with individual feelings, aspirations, and attitudes no matter what cultural orientation they represent.
6. Assist all young people to understand and confront feelings of ethnic groups other than their own.
7. Identify and explore solutions to problems arising in cultural diversity.
8. Recognize and create positive ways to cope with racial attitudes of young people as shown in their behavior.
9. Create a climate of mutual trust and constructive interpersonal and intergroup relationships.
10. Build intercultural cohesiveness and dispel myths about the intellectual inferiority or superiority of ethnic groups.
11. Utilize research skills relating to cultural pluralism.
12. Recognize that within the realm of potential of every human being there is a level of awareness and achievement which can make life rewarding, and that most young people want desperately to find that level.
13. Assume the responsibility of helping to devise programs which reach out to students and engage them in a process which is both interesting and fair, and will thus lead to a level of awareness and achievement which gives them a positive perception of themselves and their relationships to others.

14. Develop viable strategies to confront young people with moral, ethical, and spiritual conflicts of their culture and motivate them to devise a system of values which is both personal and internalized.

15. Build and promote viable channels for meaningful communication among students, colleagues, and parents to lessen language barriers.

Multicultural Education Course Framework. Development of the many competencies may be achieved through a course framework which includes some of the following components:

I. The teacher, classroom, and multicultural education
   - A. Examine rationale for multicultural education
   - B. Examine assumptions
   - C. Develop awareness of teacher competencies and expected student outcomes

II. Conceptual frameworks for multicultural education
   - A. Develop awareness and understanding of the effects/interrelationships of racism, sexism, handicapism, and ageism
   - B. Develop understanding of terms important to the concept of multicultural education
   - C. Examine five approaches to the conceptualization of multicultural education:
     1. Education of the culturally different/benevolent multiculturalism
     2. Education about cultural differences/ cultural understanding
     3. Education for cultural pluralism
     4. Bicultural education
     5. Multicultural education as the normal human experience

III. Intercultural communication skills
   - A. Develop understanding of process of sterotyping and relationship to prejudice
   - B. Develop awareness of the role of nonverbal communication in the intercultural communication process
   - C. Recognize stumbling blocks common to intercultural communication

IV. Diagnosing multicultural needs of the classroom
   - A. Develop awareness of the relationship of teaching/learning styles and the classromm
   - B. Develop skills in diagnosing teaching style and classroom's climate.
   - C. Recognize racial and sexual bias in curriculum materials

V. Implementing multicultural education in the classroom
   A. Develop skills in promoting multicultural focus throughout the curriculum-
      1. Historical and social events examined from various cultural/ethnic perspectives
      2. Cross-cultural comparative studies
      3. Infusion of multicultural content within basic skills of language arts, reading, writing etc.
   B. Develop respect and acceptance of self and others
      1. Self-awareness
      2. Cultural self-awareness
      3. Multicultural awareness
      4. Cross cultural experiences

Conclusion. The national experience is a multicultural one. Education must structure a method to reflect that reality in the classroom. Teacher education faces the difficult task of providing prospective teachers with the means to achieve that objective.

Since educational institutions, like all bureaucracies change slowly, it is necessary to define a strategy using existing resources and minimal disruption in gaining the curricular needs. That objective can be achieved with the cooperation of a few outside faculty and departments committing to two courses, which are in most cases already taught in some fashion. Next, a teacher education course that focuses on multicultural education is needed to legitimize its importance and to translate the student's knowledge into a classroom skill for a prospective teacher. The proposed workshop model for existing teachers is an alternative.

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